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9-1-2009

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Robert P. Holley
Wayne State University, aa3805@wayne.edu

Recommended Citation
Holley, R. P. (2009). Three cheers for the Google Books project! *Against the Grain, 21*(4), 44.
Available at: http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/slisfrp/17

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Three Cheers for the Google Books Project!

by **Bob Holley** (Professor, Library & Information Science Program, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202; Phone: 313-577-4021; Fax: 313-577-7563) <aa3805@wayne.edu>

I'd compare the Google Books Project to efforts to settle the American West in the 19th century. If I'm remembering my history correctly, the railroads received massive land grants from the government but would make money from these grants only if they sold the land to settlers. The railroads then convinced settlers to migrate to the Great Plains, often through over-optimistic descriptions. The railroads may have profited unfairly from the government largess and may have even bribed some government officials to do so, but the government achieved its objective of populating the plains.

In the same fashion, Google may be setting itself up to gain exorbitant future profits, may be trampling on authors rights, may be eliminating future competitors, and may be guilty of wholesale copyright violations; but Google is getting the job done. I don't see any competitors even on the distant horizon. What other entity has the goal of digitizing human knowledge? Libraries, of course, but they don't have the money and certainly can't expect sufficient grant funding from the federal government that has enough problems with the current economy. If I were a Google stockholder, I might even ask questions at the next annual meeting because this investment is a risky bet that may take many years to valorize.

I haven't yet read any comparisons between Google Books and the creation of numerous major microform sets from the 1950s to the 1980s. (My Google search suggests that none exists.) The vendors selected various projects of greater or lesser importance, found the items to film, produced the film/fiche/micro-opaque copies, and sent their salespeople out to pitch the sets to the academic library community. I am almost certain that the libraries that provided the items for filming received some benefits from the filming, at the minimum, a free copy of the set. While this filming didn't involve the legal complexities of the current operation since virtually all the materials weren't covered by copyright partly because many publishers filmed materials included in retrospective bibliographies of older publications but also because the reach of copyright didn't extend as far into the past as it does today. Other companies could have created competing versions of the same product. Imagine this taunt: "Our version of *Early English Books* is better than your version of *Early English Book*." The companies, of course, didn't compete because such duplication wasn't economically viable.

Perhaps I'm naïve, but I don't see the need for a competing project. As I said above, I certainly haven't identified any other corporation that would undertake it. If librarians have created registers of microform masters to avoid duplication in preservation microfilming, why is it so important to duplicate digital versions? If the settlement is finally signed and passes Department of Justice scrutiny, Google might be willing to look at creative ways to increase sales by making available subsets of the digital archives for specific purposes. I could see some use in identifying, just as an example, *Core Resources in Political Science*. Subject experts in the field would select the titles. A library could buy them in the same way that they used to buy major microform sets. Google might create the sets itself or might license such sales to third parties. Finally, I don't see any reason why companies or individuals couldn't produce bibliographies based upon the Google holdings to be used by libraries for specific acquisitions purposes. I don't think that doing so would violate copyright in the slightest way.

I've thought over this issue for nearly a month. Unlike some others, I see mainly advantages. One million public domain books from Google Books are now available on the Sony eBook Store. Amazon is offering for sale around 400,000 books in more than 200 languages from the University of Michigan's digital archives. I believe that these concrete accomplishments outweigh any theoretical objections.

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people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there — important, that is, simply as an idea (**Stegner** "Wilderness Letter").

So what have letterhead and the wilderness to do with each other? Precisely this: They possess inherent beauty and demonstrate placed, grounded reality. They are substantive and present in the here and now. They appeal to all our senses. They contribute to our sense of humanity. We will miss them when they are gone. We will miss one another when cyberspace becomes our only home.

What's in a Name?

by **Steven Shapiro** (Electronic Resources Librarian, Montclair State University) <shapiros@mail.montclair.edu>

What's in a Name? Quite a bit when you're talking about a database or electronic resource. A database's name could be potentially revealing or, oftentimes, confusing. I'm embarrassed to admit it but when we used to subscribe to **Gale's Expanded Academic ASAP**, I often got it confused with **EBSCO's Academic Search Premier**. Perhaps it was the fact that they were both billed as general all-purpose databases with the word "Academic" in their title as well as the fact that **Academic Search Premiers** initials, **ASP**, were similar to **ASAP**. I was very happy when we upgraded from **Expanded Academic ASAP** to **Gale's Academic Onefile** (which we later canceled). I found myself no longer confusing the **EBSCO** and **Gale** databases. On the other hand, I can only imagine what are patrons thought. **Academic Search Premier**, **Expanded Academic ASAP**, and **Academic Onefile** must sound like a stream of nondescript gobbledygook.

I recently had a discussion with a colleague regarding the **Emerald** database (aka **Emerald Insight**) which includes journal content from Emerald publishing. It is not obvious from the name that it includes a substantial amount of material related to management. I don't think it would be unfair for someone to assume that the database is devoted to Irish Studies. That is why we refer to the database as **Emerald Management** on our Website. The downside to this strategy is that, of course, there are other subject areas covered in **Emerald** like Information Technology which are not reflected in the name. As a corrective, we list **Emerald** under the subject heading Computer Science on our database page (along with Business/Economics).

As librarians we are supposed to direct our users to the most appropriate resources related to their research or topic. We do not do our

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